

DC

IN THIS
ISSUE:

ACTION-PLUS
WITH: *THE HUMAN TARGET!*

20c

ACTION COMICS



ACTION COMICS

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

NO. 420
JAN.
30410



I
DID
IT!

--CREATED A
BIGGER AND
BETTER
SUPERMAN!



SUPERMAN
OF EARTH

"The MADE-TO-ORDER MENACE!"

FBScan

In marksmanship
competition,
a boy learns
to act like a man.
Daisy's 99
"Champion"
B-B Gun teaches
the same
lessons.

Shooting competition isn't kid stuff. You learn safety and marksmanship. And you learn fast.

The Daisy 99 "Champion" B-B Gun teaches those same lessons, because it's used in competition. It's a B-B gun. Not a toy.

In fact, it's the official gun of the U.S. Jaycees Shooting Education Program. It's the one boys use from local meets to international competition.

You can find out about the shooting education program in your area by contacting your local Jaycee office.



And now you can learn marksmanship with the exciting Daisy B-B Target-Trap. It's a \$4 value, now yours for only \$1.99 when you buy any Daisy B-B Gun. Take the coupon below to your store when you buy. For even more fun, pick up our booklet, "The Air Rifle Marksman," where you buy your Daisy. It's only 50¢. Learn the lessons of marksmanship competition with the Daisy 99 "Champion"!

Or choose from over 30 other models of Daisy B-B spring-air, CO₂, and pellet guns.

Since the 1800's, American boys have learned marksmanship with a Daisy. Now it's your turn.

Daisy B-B Target-Trap. \$1.99

with purchase of any Daisy B-B Gun.

A \$4 value.

The kit includes: Trap frame to catch B-Bs / Targetlex rubber backstop / Daisy Air Rifle Manual / Full set of NRA 15-foot match targets / Full set of "Pop-Out" Bullseye Targets. (See the Bullseye "Pop-Out" when you hit it!)

TAKE THIS COUPON WHEN YOU BUY.

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SINCE 1888

Rogers, Arkansas 72756, Div. Victor Comptometer Corp.
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SUPERMAN

NOW HERE'S
SUPERMAN IN
SLOW-MOTION,
CREATING A **SUPER-
SPEED UPDRAFT...**

... TEMPORARILY
TURNING A **TIDAL
WAVE** INTO A **WATER-
SPOUT** AS IT'S ABOUT
TO HIT THE COAST OF
RODITIN, INDIA...

STILL IN **SLOW-
MOTION...** YOU CAN
SEE **SUPERMAN**
BARRELING THROUGH
THE GROUND IN FRONT
OF THE WAVE, LEAVING
A HUGE **DITCH**
IN HIS WAKE...

... AND THEN
GATHERING GREAT
PILES OF **SAND**
FROM THE BEACH,
FUSING THE SAND
TOGETHER WITH
SUPER-PRESSURE
TO CONSTRUCT A
DIKE OF **SUPER-
HARD GLASS** TO
KEEP BACK THE
FLOOD!

THE MADE-TO-ORDER MENACE!

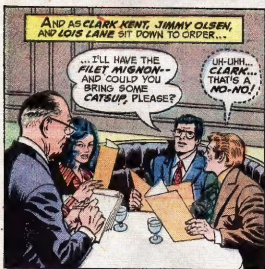
STORY BY ELLIOT MAGGIN

ART BY CURT SWAN & MURPHY ANDERSON

ACTION COMICS, Vol. 36, No. 420, Jan., 1973. Published monthly by NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 909 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. Carmine Infantino, Publisher; Julius Schwartz, Editor; E. Neilson Bradwell, Assistant Editor; Sol Harrison, Production Manager; Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y.; and additional mailing offices. Advertising Representative: Sanford Schwarz & Co., Inc., 16 West 46th Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. Copyright © 1972 by National Periodical Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

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SEVERAL HOURS LATER, IN AN ORBIT 44,000 MILES ABOVE THE EARTH, IN A SPACECRAFT HIDDEN FROM ALL DETECTION DEVICES, STRANGE THOUGHTS ARE BEING THOUGHT...

SO!-- THIS ILLUSTRIOUS SUPERMAN I HEARD SO MANY STORIES ABOUT IS INDEED AN ACTUAL PERSON-- NOT JUST A LEGEND!

HE WOULD MAKE AN EXCITING CHARACTER FOR ONE OF MY STORIES...

FOR IN THAT CRAFT IS TOWBEE, THE MINSTREL OF SPACE, HAPPY WANDERER AMONG THE STARS...

I HAVE EXHAUSTED MY REPERTOIRE OF STORIES THAT I SING TO LONELY SPACE-VOYAGERS...

SO I WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO CREATE SOME NEW ONES!

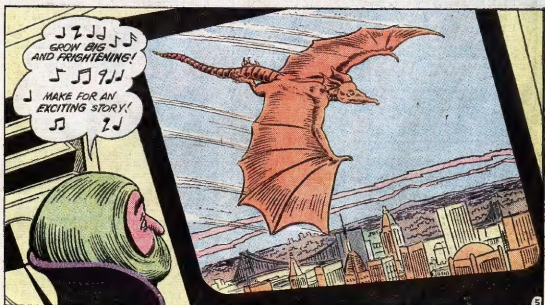
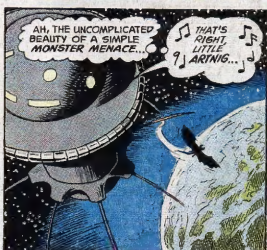
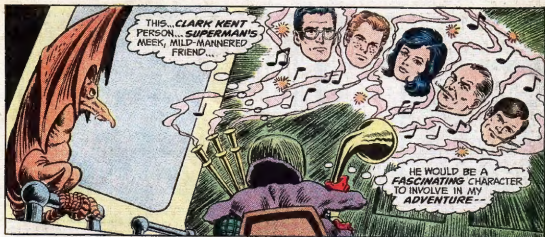
YOU COULD NOT REALLY CALL TOWBEE A VILLAIN-- NOT REALLY...

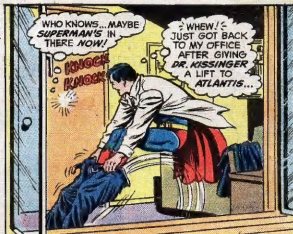
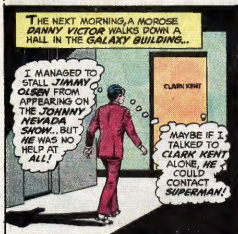
HE JUST NEVER WORRIED PARTICULARLY ABOUT LITTLE THINGS-- LIKE WHAT "RIGHT" AND "WRONG" MEANT, FOR INSTANCE...

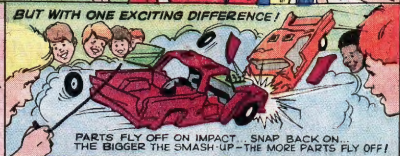
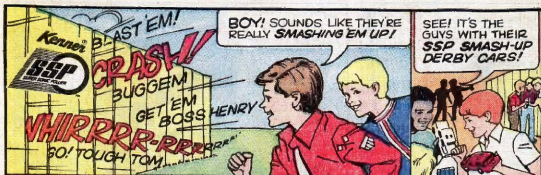
OBSERVE NOW, AS HE PLAYS HIS SCREENSONG-- AN INSTRUMENT THAT CASTS SOLID IMAGES AS WELL AS SOUNDS-- AND CREATES SOMETHING NEW...

I WILL DEVISE A MENACE...

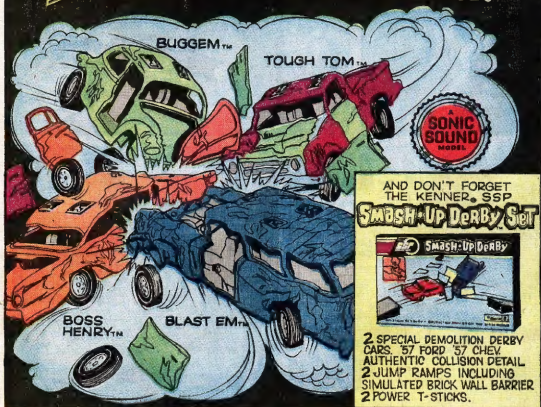
...MADE TO ORDER-- TO BRING SUPERMAN INTO ACTION!







NOW THERE ARE **4 NEW** KENNER SSP SMASH-UP DERBY CARS AVAILABLE!





AT THAT MOMENT, ON THE STREETS OUTSIDE...

LOOK!... UP IN THE SKY!

IT'S A BIRD!

IF THAT'S A BIRD, I'M A GILA MONSTER! I'M GETTIN' OUTA HERE!



AN EMERGENCY WITH DANNY VICTOR, I'LL HAVE TO PUT ON MY SCARED ACT TILL I CAN GET AWAY!

OOOH-- THAT... THING!... IT'S COMING STRAIGHT AT US! WE BETTER RUN!

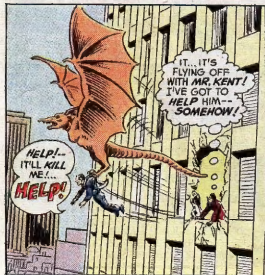
TAKE IT EASY, MR. KENT! IT'S WAY TOO BIG TO GET THROUGH THIS WINDOW!



SKRAAWWWW!

RUN, MR. KENT! GET OUT OF THE WAY!

GAAH!



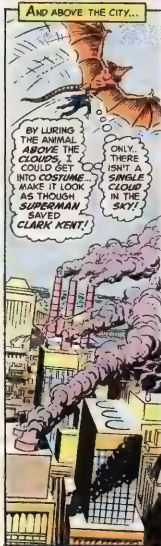
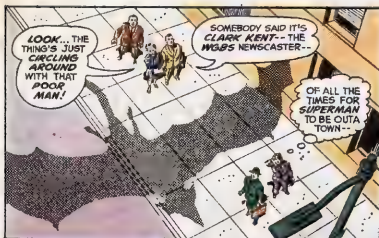
HELP!... IT'LL KILL ME... HELP!

IT... IT'S FLYING OFF WITH MR. KENT! I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM-- SOMEHOW!



THE STARS ONLY KNOW WHAT MY CREATURE WANTS WITH A SIMPLE SPECIMEN LIKE CLARK KENT...

BUT A STORY IS A STORY! IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT DEVELOPS...



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L-4



L-6



L-12



L-11



M-115



M-163



M-119



M-123



M-122



M-160



M-106



M-180



M-166



M-132



M-527



M-120



M-180



M-508



M-182



M-13



M-126



M-164



L-1



M-128



M-173



M-127



M-153



M-128



L-7



M-128



L-10



M-153



L-7



M-128

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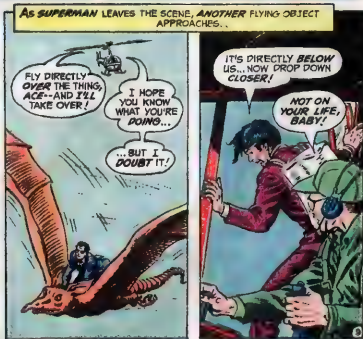
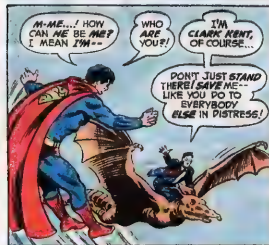
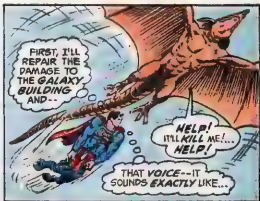
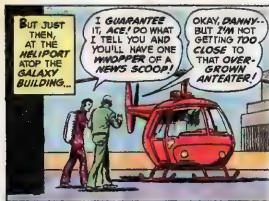
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Add 4% in N.Y. **TOTAL \$**

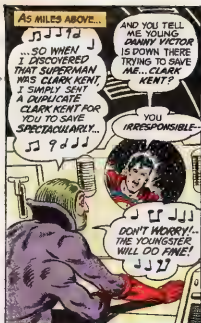
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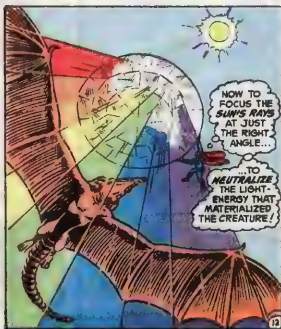
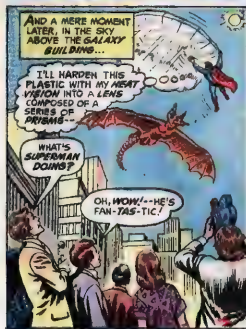
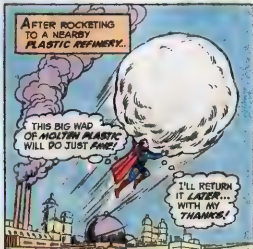
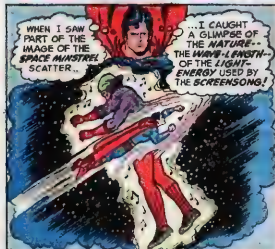
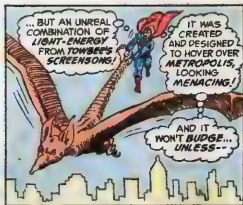
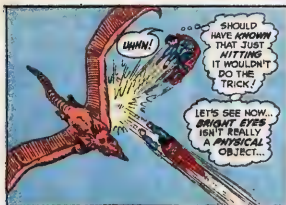
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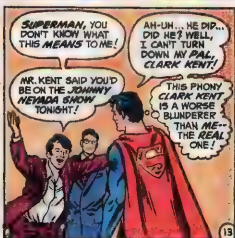
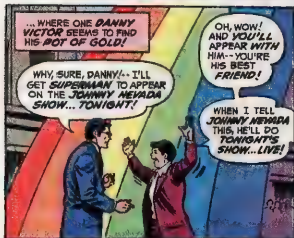
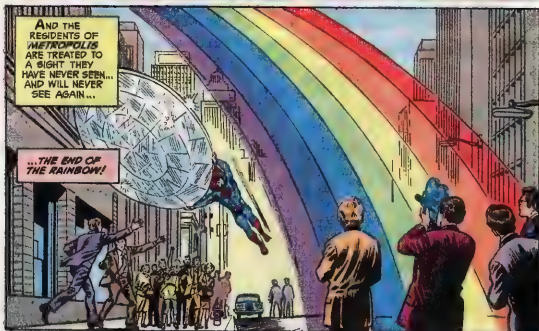
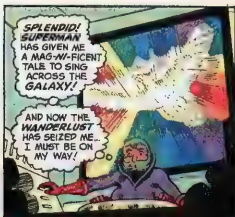
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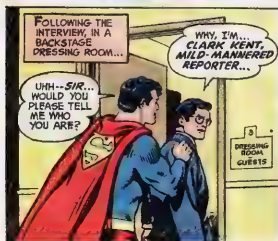
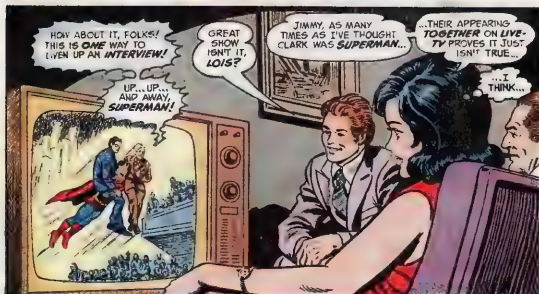
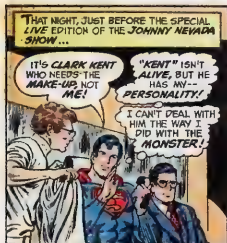


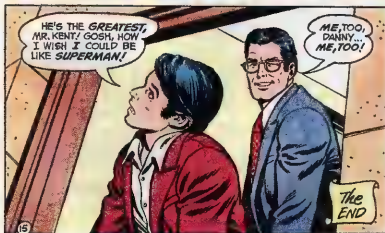
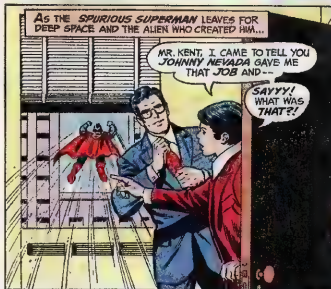
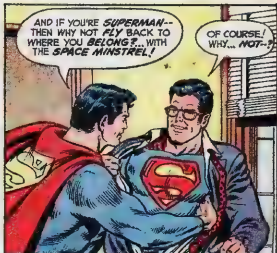
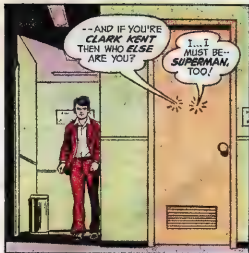












COMING SUPER ATTRACTIONS!
IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF
SUPERMAN...
the MAN OF STEEL
becomes the
**"SLAVE OF STAR
SAPPHIRE!"**
[ON SALE ON OR ABOUT DEC. 14th]



AND IN THE FEB. **ACTION...**
SUPERMAN IS
HARD-PRESSED TO TOP
"THE FANTASTIC FEATS
of **CAPTAIN
STRONG!**"

ALSO...AN ACTION-PLUS
THRILLER SOLO-STARRING
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- 17 ☐ SUPERGIRL
- 18 ☐ SECRET ORIGINS

MYSTERY

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- 31 ☐ HOUSE OF MYSTERY
- 32 ☐ HOUSE OF SECRETS
- 33 ☐ PHANTOM STRANGER
- 34 ☐ THE UNEXPECTED
- 35 ☐ THE WITCHING HOUR
- 36 ☐ THE DEMON
- 37 ☐ SWAMP THING
- 38 ☐ SECRETS OF SINISTER HOUSE

43 ☐ WEIRD MYSTERY TALES 70 ☐ WEIRD WESTERN TALES

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- 45 ☐ FALLING IN LOVE
- 46 ☐ GIRLS' LOVE STORIES
- 47 ☐ LOVE STORIES
- 48 ☐ YOUNG LOVE
- 49 ☐ YOUNG ROMANCE

WAR

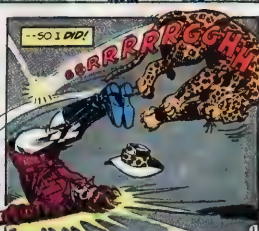
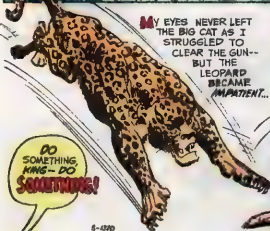
- 60 ☐ G.I. COMBAT
- 61 ☐ OUR ARMY AT WAR
- 62 ☐ OUR FIGHTING FORCES
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- 64 ☐ WEIRD WAR TALES

ADVENTURE

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- 78 ☐ KANANDI
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SCIENCE FICTION

- 80 ☐ FROM BEYOND THE UNKNOWN
- 81 ☐ STRANGE ADVENTURES





I WAS BACK ON MY FEET BEFORE THE SNARLING FELINE REGAINED ITS SENSES --AND THE UNEVEN STAND-OFF BEGAN ANEW...

THE CAT'S TENSING-- GETTING READY TO STRIKE AGAIN--

--AND MY LITTLE STUNT WON'T WORK TWICE!

BETTER COME UP WITH SOMETHING ELSE...

AND FAST!



TWIN EMERALD ORBS GLITTERED IN THE SHADOWS--AS I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF SOMETHING FROM THE CORNER OF MY EYE...

K-KING--? W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THAT CAMERA COST A SMALL FORTUNE!

DON'T ANNOY ME, MISTER LAVENDER --IF YOU WANT TO LIVE TO SPEND ANOTHER ONE!

I WAITED, STUDYING MY FOUR-FOOTED Foe CAREFULLY, WATCHING FOR THE CURL OF THE LIP, THE TELL-TALE TREMOR IN THE HAUNCHES...

NOW! THE LEOPARD LEAPED

...AND A MINIA-TURE SUN EXPLODED IN ITS FACE!

IT WAS SIMPLE TO AVOID THE MAD, BLIND LUNGE--AND DO WHAT HAD TO BE DONE...

THIS IS A TERRIBLE WAY TO TREAT A NORMALLY FINE RIFLE--

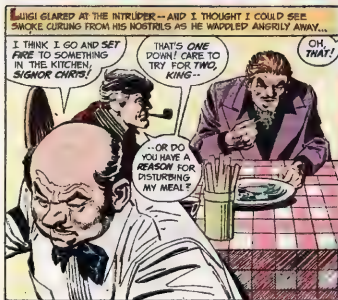
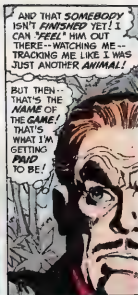
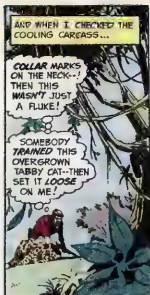
--BUT RIGHT NOW, IT'S NOT GOOD FOR MUCH ELSE!

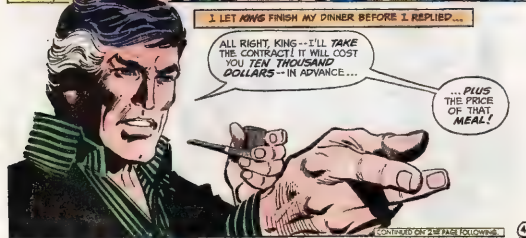
KKRACKK!



THE BIG CAT'S ANGRY GROWL DIED IN MID-LEAP...

...AND SO DID THE CAT ITSELF...



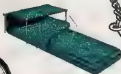


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**Print Your
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[illegible]

I DIDN'T
LIKE BECOM-
ING GUNTHER
KING. THERE
WAS SOME-
THING ABOUT
THE MAN --
A NAUSEAT-
ING ODOR --
THAT SEEMED
TO RUB OFF
ON EVERYTHING
HE TOUCHED...

FORTUNATELY,
I DIDN'T HAVE
TO DUPLICATE
THAT ODOR...



FORTY-
EIGHT
HOURS
LATER, I
WAS ON
A PLANE
TO
KENYA...



WE ROSE WITH
THE SUN THE NEXT
MORNING -- FOLLOWED
IT ACROSS THE VELDT IN
SEARCH OF CAMERA FODDER --

--BUT THE LAND WAS
FAR HARDIER THAN MY
DILETTANTE QUENTS...

MMMMOTHER,
DARLING --
ALL THIS
B-B-BUMPING
IS SIMPLY
RUINING
MY HAIR!



SPEAK TO YOUR FATHER,
DEAR -- MAYBE HE CAN HAVE
THE WHOLE JUNGLE PAVED!

AND
AFTER

QUICKLY, LUCIEN --
WHILE THAT WEAVER
BIRD IS STILL IN
MY SIGHTS --
SHOOT!

I'M TRYING, MY LOVE --
BUT THE CAMERA REFUSES
TO COOPERATE!

IT WAS A DEPRESS-
INGLY LONG DAY...

AND WHEREVER WE TRAVELED, I COULD HEAR
THE FAINT ECHO OF ANOTHER ENGINE ROLLING
BACK FROM THE DISTANCE...

...WE WERE
NOT ALONE!

HOLAWAY'S
OUT THERE --
PLAYING HIS
CAT-AND-MOUSE
GAMES! WELL,
LET HIM!

THIS
MOUSE
HAS
FANGS
OF HIS
OWN!

WE SET UP CAMP ABOUT 4:30 AND SETTLED
IN FOR THE NIGHT -- BUT IT WOULDN'T BE A
QUIET NIGHT...

...FOR, JUST AN
HOUR BEFORE DUSK...

DID
YOU HEAR
THAT?

WHY -- IT
SOUNDED
LIKE
SOME
POOR
ANIMAL IN
DISTRESS!

KEEP
CALM --
WHILE I
CHECK
IT OUT!

THE PITIFUL WHINE LED ME TO THE EDGE OF A NEARBY CLEARING-- AND A YOUNG *IMPALA* CAUGHT IN SOME HUNTER'S SNARE...

EASY, LITTLE ONE-- TAKE IT EASY! I'LL HAVE YOU OUT OF THAT IN A MOMENT!

I WAS WRONG THAT SORRY CREATURE WASN'T AN IMPALA...

IT WAS A JUDAS GOAT!

WHA--? ANOTHER SNARE--!

I'VE BEEN HAD!

THE JOLT HAD KNOCKED THE WIND OUT OF ME--SO I COULD DO NOTHING BUT SWAY THERE AS I STRUGGLED TO LOCATE MY BREATH...

THAT'S WHEN I NOTICED...

--A CAPE BUFFALO--THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL!

GOOD THING I DIDN'T DISTURB HIM--OR HE'D TEAR ME TO PIECES!

APPARENTLY, THAT WAS EXACTLY THE IDEA--FOR SUDDENLY...

SNORFF!

BLAM!

WITH AN ENRAGED BELLOW, THE BUFFALO ATTACKED--AND I SEARCHED AROUND DESPERATELY FOR SOME KIND OF DEFENSE...

THE ONLY VULNERABLE SPOT ON THAT MANGY HIDE IS DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE EYES--BUT MY RIFLE IS OUT OF REACH!

HAVE TO RELY ON MY HANDGUN--AND HOPE I CAN CONNECT BEFORE THAT BEAST DOES!

RIFLE SHOT--!

HOLAWAY'S CLIPPED THE BUFFALO--

-AND LEFT ME TO TAKE THE BLAME!



CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

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I'D DONE THIS KIND OF SHOOTING BEFORE ON MY PRIVATE RANGE -- BUT THEN IT HAD BEEN THE TARGET THAT WAS SWINGING, NOT ME...

I IMAGINED A SILVER DOLLAR-SIZED BULL'S-EYE AT THE JUNCTURE OF THE BUFFALO'S HORNS--AND PUT SIX .357 MAGNUM SLUGS INTO IT BEFORE THE TINY BRAIN GOT THE MESSAGE...



IN LESS THAN A MINUTE, I WAS BACK ON MY FEET --HAD FREED THE IMPALA-- RECLAIMED MY RIFLE-- AND WAS EXAMINING THE FRESH CARCASS, WHEN...

BLASTED BEAST WAS TOO MEAN TO DIE FROM...

BLAM!

RIFLE FIRE-- FROM THE RIVER BANK! HOLAWAY'S STOPPED PLAYING GAMES WITH ME!

MUSCLES UNCOILED AND I LEAPED FOR COVER...

...BUT I STOPPED IN MID-STRIDE AS I WITNESSED...

WHA--? SOMEBODY HAS ATTACKED MY ATTACKER!

I WAS SPRINTING TOWARDS THE BANK EVEN AS HOLAWAY'S BODY SPRAWLED FACE FORWARD INTO THE MUD...

--NEVER EXPECTING WHAT I FOUND WHEN I GOT THERE...

GREETINGS, BWANA --LOOKS LIKE I DID YOUR JOB FOR YOU!

HOLAWAY IS DEAD! I HAD TO SHOOT HIM-- BEFORE HE GOT YOU!

THERE WAS NO MORE NEED FOR MY DISGUISE. I REMOVED IT-- AND BENT DOWN TO EXAMINE THE CORPSE...



GOOD THING I DECIDED TO TRAIL YOU, BUDDY...

FIGURED HOLAWAY MIGHT BE TOO MUCH FOR YOU--!



BETTER PICK UP HOLAWAY'S RIFLE! IT'S TOO MAGNIFICENT A WEAPON TO LEAVE LYING IN THE...

THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED...



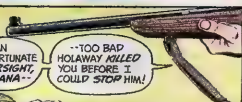
THIS WASN'T SELF-DEFENSE, KING... IT WAS **MURDER!**

IF HOLAWAY WAS GRASPING HIS RIFLE WHEN HE FELL-- WHY IS THERE MUD ON THE PALM OF HIS HAND?



AN UNFORTUNATE OVERSIGHT, BWANA--

--TOO BAD HOLAWAY KILLED YOU BEFORE I COULD STOP HIM!



IT TOOK KING'S FINGER THREE-TENTHS OF A SECOND TO TIGHTEN ON THE TRIGGER... WHICH WAS A TENTH OF A SECOND LONGER THAN IT TOOK ME TO--

--LEAP!

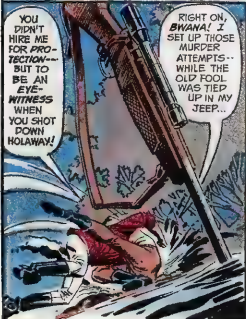


UUNNFF!

I DON'T LIKE BEING PLAYED FOR A SUCKER, KING...

YOU DIDN'T HIRE ME FOR PROTECTION-- BUT TO BE AN EYE-WITNESS WHEN YOU SHOT DOWN HOLAWAY!

RIGHT ON, BWANA! I SET UP THOSE MURDER ATTEMPTS-- WHILE THE OLD FOOL WAS TIED UP IN MY JEEP...



...THEN SET HIM FREE AND BLASTED HIM WHERE I WAS CERTAIN YOU'D SEE IT!

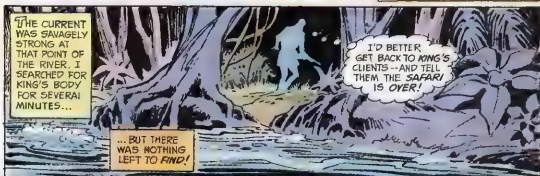
AND...I PUT HIS OWN RIFLE IN HIS HANDS TO MAKE IT CONVINCING!



UUNNFF THUMP!



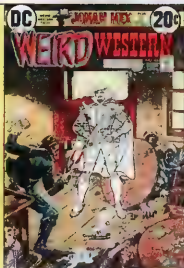
THE RIFLE BARREL WAS CLOGGED WITH MUD! THERE'D BEEN NO PLACE FOR THE BULLET TO GO WHEN KING PULLED THE TRIGGER!

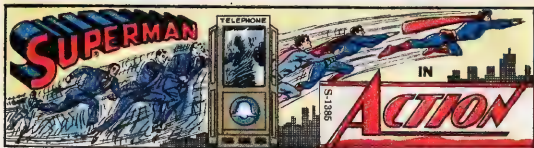


NEXT ISSUE ON SALE ON OR ABOUT DEC. 28TH

THE END

BE WITH US IN OUR NEXT
RIP-ROARING
ISSUE OF
WEIRD WESTERN
TALES
featuring  JONAH HEX  EL DIABLO
ON SALE
ON OR ABOUT
DEC. 7TH





Dear Editor:

A glance at *Action* #416's cover brought mixed reactions. Could I pray for the return of the lovely *Lori Lemaris*? Don't be ridiculous, I thought. It seemed like the usual run-of-the-mill *Supie* story, so I proceeded to muddle through it. Only I didn't muddle—I enjoyed! This tale was different in that it was not the general *Superman-must-save-mankind* thriller. Instead, we found him battling against the negative views of one innocently mixed-up girl.

Christy is what *Clark* needs: a woman without the brashness of a *Lois Lane*, or the timid qualities he feigns in order to cover his *Superman* identity. Congratulate *Cary* for a fine change-of-pace script.

I plead for *Christy's* presence in some future epic, for I feel a unique character should not be a one-timer.

Oh, and before I forget (but how could I?), *Metamorpho* makes a great back-up strip. Keep the faith.
Mary E. Tribble, Atlanta, Ga.

(When we find a story *Christy* fits, she'll be back. As for *Metamorpho*, he's relinquished his *Action* post to *The Human Target* (and, next issue, *The Green Arrow*), but he'll be guesting in the near future in *World's Finest*, in a story starring *Superman* and *Batman's* future sons. After that—who knows?—E.N.B.)

Dear Editor:

After a long series of really well-done stories, you have finally published a disappointing issue of *Action*. "*Superman, You Scare Me To Death*," in #416, was quite a let-down from the usual quality and entertainment that has characterized most of *Cary Bates'* other recent efforts.

The story started out fine, with the mystery of *Christy's* fear of *Superman*, the irony that brought these two together again, and their entrapment on a strange island all combining to promise yet another brilliant chapter in the *Superman* saga. However, this promise was to fall far short of fulfillment. A somewhat less than intriguing explanation of *Christy's* phobia, *Superman's* egomaniacal handling of the sea-jackers, and the appearance of yet another robot-from-space (rapidly becoming a comic cliché) turned a potentially exciting plot into an exercise in disjointed interest and predictability. The only surprise in the story was that there were no surprises.

And by the way, the idea of a romantic relationship with a girl who hates the hero but loves his secret identity (hinted at in the last panel) has already been used in one of a competitor's magazines for a couple of years, so please don't play this angle up too much.

I have enough faith in Mr. Bates to believe that this was only a one-issue slump, and look forward to reading more great stories in the future.

David B. Micheline, Jeffersonville, Ind.

(Just for the record, Dave, we used the idea of the girl who hates the hero and likes his alter-ego back in 1966, in our *Future Superman* tales.—E.N.B.)

Dear Editor:

There is only one thing I can say about *Action* #416, and that is, great. When *Cary Bates* wrote this story, he must have been thinking of a new addition to the *Superman* family, because that's what he did with *Christy*. Since you've been showing a turn-off by *Lois of Clark*, *Christy* could become *Clark's* steady. (Sort of a different girl friend for each life.) Just think of the fun you people can have dreaming up stories about this matter.

As for the cover, who drew it? The art looks familiar, especially with the boyish face of *Superman*.

Joe Starkevich, Rochester, N.Y.

(That cover was the work of that Ace artist, that King of comic, Nick Cardy. The Joker is—E.N.B.)

Dear Editor:

One can tire of *Lex Luthor* and his constant jail-breaks, monsters and robots appearing from nowhere, and time-trips conveniently written into the story to provide plot. This is why I found *Action* #416 so enjoyable. It wasn't a story of *Superman* saving the Earth; it was a story about the people themselves.

Curt Swan and *Murphy Anderson* do a fantastic job on *Superman*, but rarely do justice to the other characters in the story. Surprisingly, such was not the case with "*Superman, You Scare Me To Death*," *Christy* was a truly beautiful girl as depicted by *Swan* and *Anderson*. I doubt that anyone else could have done such a job.

Still, good illustrations don't always mean a good story. Let me hasten to say that I was most impressed with *Cary Bates*. He has an amazing ability for combining action with a certain amount of human interest. The story had an exciting plot, great action shots, and the ending was a surprise in itself. I never expected *Clark* to have the diamonds! The story had all this going for it, not to mention the addition of an original and interesting character.

My only disappointment with the story was *Christy's* comment at the end. Why did she insist that *Clark* was not there when she needed him? Who does she think protected her from those alien blasts? Meek, mild *Clark Kent*, that's who!

Kenneth Swart, Pomona, Calif.

(True enough—but *Clark* wasn't there when she met the one person she feared more than alien blasts—*Superman*!—E.N.B.)

Remember—the address for all comments on this issue is *SUPERMAN IN ACTION*, National Periodical Publications, 909 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

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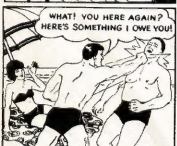
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